

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Project Description**

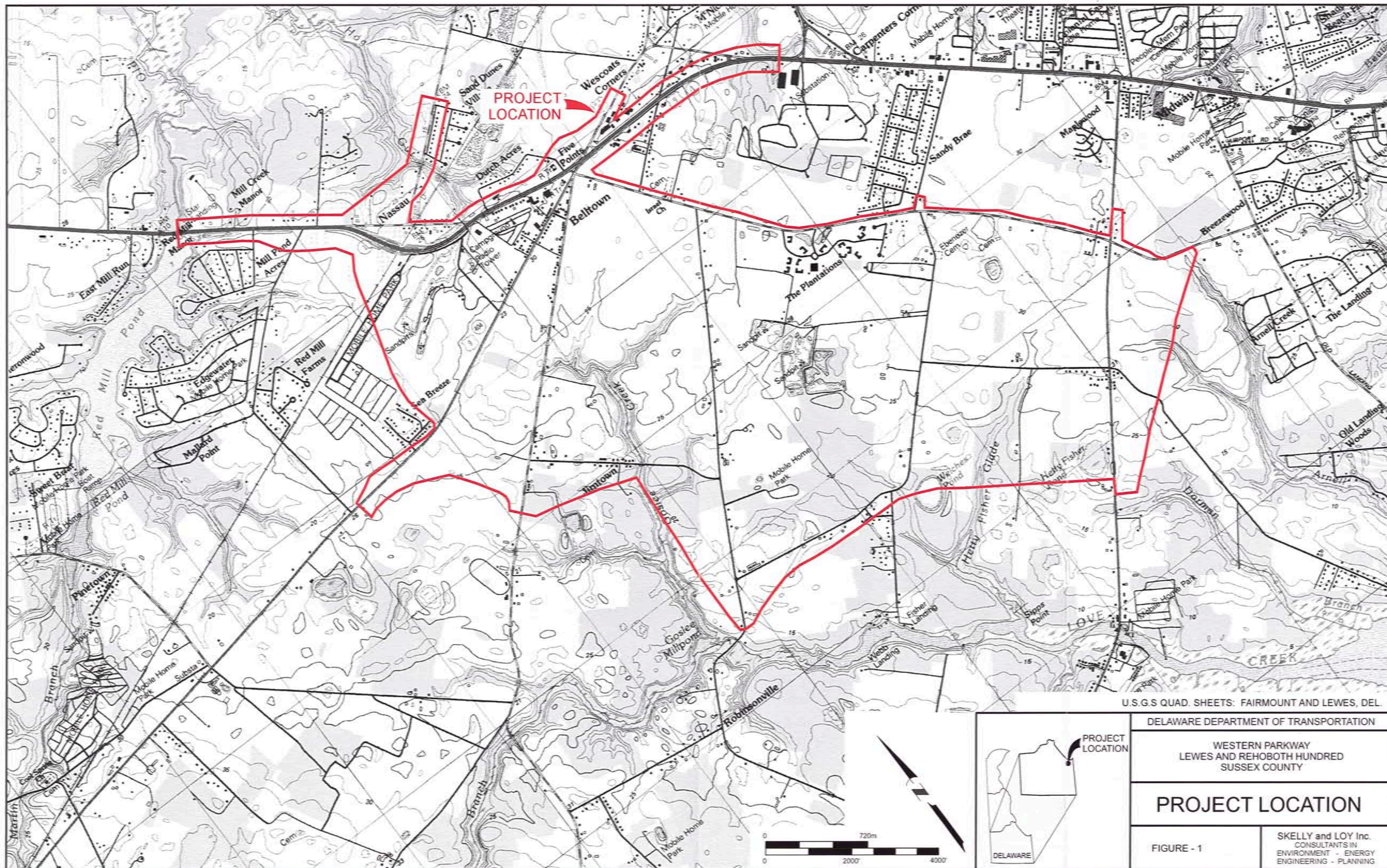
This report describes the results of a Phase II evaluation-level historic architectural resource survey conducted on behalf of the Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT) for the proposed Western Parkway Project in Lewes and Rehoboth Hundred, Sussex County, Delaware (Figure 1). The project area is located on the United States Geological Survey (USGS) Lewes, Delaware (USGS 1997) and Fairmount, Delaware (USGS 1984) 7.5 minute topographic quadrangles in the Lower Coastal Plain physiographic province. The Phase II evaluation-level historic architectural resource survey is designed to assure compliance with applicable state and federal legislation, including the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, 36 CFR 800, and Executive Order 11593, as amended.

The Western Parkway consists of building a highway that would begin at U.S. Route 1 (Coastal Highway) north of Five Points near Red Mill Pond and extends southeast toward State Route (S.R.) 24 (John Williams Highway) (Figure 1). The project area is crossed by several two-lane, east-west oriented roads, including U.S. Route 9 (Seashore Highway), S.R. 23 (Beaver Dam Road), Robinsonville Road (County Road [C.R.] 277), and Cedar Grove Road (C.R. 283). Two-lane Plantations Road (C.R. 275/S.R. 1D) and U.S. Route 1 are the only major north-south oriented roads in or near the project area.

### **1.2 Project Purpose and Need**

The need for transportation changes in eastern Sussex County was introduced in the DelDOT-sponsored Sussex Route 1 Grid Study in 1999. As part of that report's Phase I recommendations, a network of secondary road connections was proposed. As part of its Phase II recommendations, a proposal was made to create a new roadway connection between U.S. Route 1 west of Five Points south to U.S. Route 9. This Phase II new roadway connection was proposed to meet one of the new secondary road connections of the Phase I study, creating a new roadway corridor west of Plantations Road from U.S. Route 1 north of Five Points to south of Old Landing Road.







Subsequent to the Sussex Route 1 Grid Study, DelDOT, and Sussex County jointly conducted the Sussex Route 1 Land Use & Transportation Study (LUTS). The stated objective of this 2003 study was to “effectively address joint interests in the transportation systems and land use for the Rehoboth/Lewes area.” The LUTS’s overall objectives were to increase the mobility of area residents by developing alternative roadway links and connections; provide a variety of ways to travel; reduce congestion; improve safety; maintain the character of the study area; and gain public acceptance of the study recommendations. The centerpiece long-term recommendation of the LUTS was a new controlled access parkway west of U.S. Route 1 that would run from northwest of Five Points to Country Club Road (C.R. 273).

As a result of these earlier studies, DelDOT is initiating the Western Parkway project to accommodate anticipated traffic growth due to existing and future land development and provide local travel options for existing and future residents west of U.S. Route 1.

Between 1990 and 2000, development in and around the project area has resulted in an 83 percent increase in population due to the increasing popularity of the Delaware beaches as both a resort area and a place to live. U.S. Route 1 and Plantations Road serve as the only two major north-south oriented roadways in the project area and are both operating at or near capacity during peak summer periods. Summer Average Daily Traffic (SADT) along U.S. Route 1 between Five Points and Rehoboth Beach is between 63,500 and 87,200 vehicles and is greatest in the section of U.S. Route 1 just north of S.R. 24. During peak summer periods when vacationers and day trippers heading toward the beaches combine with local traffic, congestion on U.S. Route 1 within the study area extends for several miles, limiting mobility for local residents. The SADT along Plantations Road is between 11,000 and 15,000 vehicles. Operational delays along Plantations Road are already being experienced with the current traffic volumes. This can be partially attributed to many travelers who use Plantations Road to avoid the severely congested sections of U.S. Route 1, making it more difficult for residents west of U.S. Route 1 to make local trips.

Land use conversion from existing agricultural uses to residential uses continues at a high rate west of Plantations Road. Assuming current land use conversion and growth trends, traffic within the study area is anticipated to increase up to 70 percent by the year 2030. Forecasted SADTs will exceed the capacity of both U.S. Route 1 and Plantations Road. This continued growth in travel demand will result in severe congestion on both U.S. Route 1 and Plantations Road during peak periods. Additionally, the duration of at-capacity conditions will increase. Without additional north-south transportation capacity within the study area, traffic is likely to divert to Plantations Road and other local roadways. This will result in intolerable

delays along both U.S. Route 1 and Plantations Road, further impeding travel and decreasing mobility for local residents living west of U.S. Route 1.

### **1.3 Area of Potential Effects**

The Area of Potential Effects (APE) for the Phase II historic architectural resource survey begins at U.S. Route 1 (Coastal Highway) north of Five Points near Red Mill Pond and extends southeast toward S.R. 24 (John Williams Highway). The APE is bounded on the east by U.S. Route 1 and Plantations Road and on the west by Jimtown and Cedar Grove roads (see Figure 1). The APE has a maximum length of 7.2 km (4.5 mi), a maximum width of 4.2 km (2.6 mi), and a total area of 1,284.2 ha (3,173.1 ac).

### **1.4 Results of Phase I Historic Architectural Resource Survey Investigations**

Skelly and Loy delivered the Phase I identification-level historic architectural resource survey report in June 2006 (Kuncio *et al.* 2006). The report included historic contexts for the APE, briefly described each of the 91 historic architectural resources constructed prior to 1963 that fell within the APE, and provided preliminary assessments of National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) eligibility for each based on the integrity of the resources, the NRHP Criteria for Evaluation, and supplemental eligibility criteria developed for each of the five major property types found within the APE. These property types included Post-World War II Dwellings and Commercial Resources; Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Agricultural Complexes and Dwellings; I-houses; Other Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Dwellings; and African American Settlement Resources. Eleven resources were recommended as eligible for NRHP listing. Two existing NRHP-eligible historic districts also fell within the APE, the Nassau Historic District and the Belltown Historic District.

### **1.5 Extent of Phase II Historic Architectural Resource Survey Investigations**

At a Western Parkway Project Team Meeting held July 7, 2006, Skelly and Loy was directed to immediately proceed with a Phase II evaluation-level historic architectural resource survey for 10 resources within the project APE. All resources have the potential for Section 4(f) impacts. Those identified resources were:

S-11519 - Nassau Orchards Market, 871 Nassau Road  
S-8393 - Belltown Historic District, U.S. Route 9 and Beaver Dam Road  
S-900 - Oakney Farmhouse, 17903 Beaver Dam Road  
S-898 - Norwood-Jackson Farm, 19961 Bee Jay Lane  
S-11730 - Jintown Potential Historic District, Jintown and Beaver Dam roads  
S-947 - Walls Farm, 18886 Robinsonville Road  
S-951 - Joseph Farm, 18345 Robinsonville Road  
S-11548 - Ebenezer M.E. Church Cemetery, Cedar Grove Road  
S-966 - Hart Farm, 34139 Cedar Grove Road  
S-8591 - Israel United Methodist Church, 20230 Plantations Road

Subsequent to the July 7, 2006 meeting, Skelly and Loy was also directed to investigate S-7911 - Holland Cemetery, a nineteenth century burying ground located off of Cedar Grove Road. The locations of all resources are found on the accompanying project mapping (Figure 2).



